REWRITE The Magazine of Effective Writing

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HAVE YOU BEEN A WORTHY APPRENTICE?

Too many writers, many of them with serious intentions toward their work, have never actually faced the question of an introductory period of apprenticeship. They have more or less assumed that writing isn't easy but after a short period of practice, they'll begin to be taken seriously by the top publishers and editors of the best magazines in the particular field to which they aspire. I hate to disillusion them, but for every one who comes up that way, there are thousands, if not millions, who come up the hard way.

The first thing every writer should do is to think through this matter of what becoming a writer is going to mean to him. Does he plan on an apprenticeship, or does he believe he is going to step right in to a career, or is he prepared to sweat it out and fight hard anywhere along the line in order to get his foot inside the door? We've seen plenty of writers whose personalities or inclinations limit them to one type of work. A writer whose only interest lies in Quality, or perhaps Slick fiction, is not usually in a good position to do pot-boilers.

It goes without saying that a prospective writer ought to weigh carefully in his mind whether he wants to write because that is a way of life for him, or because he likes to write a special type of story, or thinks it is a pleasant hobby and an amusing way to—occupy his time. If you are going to write, come-hell-or-high-water, you will stick, no matter whether the apprenticeship lasts all your life or only a day or two. But if your patience is limited, you will quit when the first little rejection slips begin to leave a trail up your front yard. We've seen some writers who could turn their backs on writing and never mind a bit. We've seen others who would return reluctantly, but inevitably to the scene of the crime.

A writer should think through the various alternatives facing him when he plunges into writing. Let us hope he is a natural and successful writer from the start. A few are and learn their profession even as the sail along under a fair breeze. But the greatest number face a much more difficult task. So, what are they going to do about it? A lot of them try hap-hazard methods and waste precious years. The first and obvious assignment is to learn how to write reasonably decent, interesting English. But a degree is not an iron-clad guarantee that editors will offer immediate acceptance or even a warm welcome to you. We have worked with many university professors, who were authorities in a special line, buy dry as sawdust when it became necessary to tell the layman about it.

Have you got the spark? Can you make subjects of complete unimportance interesting? If you haven't an obvious ability to interest readers in what interests you, have you the necessary imagination to set about what is essential to bring that quality out in—you? A dull and seeming ungraceful person, a clod to you or me, can often by sheer force of determination and painstaking patience in seeking a desired result, accomplish a miracle.

Too many writers seek the easy way out instead of admitting that an apprenticeship is necessary, and attacking the problem with a logical and practical plan. Some inexperienced writers think that if only they can have an agent, everything will be wonderful, and all the problems connected with markets and selling will be automatically taken care of by their good angel. These writers naturally are disappointed. No legitimate agent is able to spend much time on writers who have yet to sell, or who sell, but only to small markets, and perhaps at long intervals. The agent earns a living to the extent that his writers sell regularly and to markets which insure him commissions of at least $10.00 (a check for $100.00). And it takes a good lot of those to pay for his reading time, secretary, office, transportation charges & postage, to mention only the most obvious "overhead".

Other writers realizing that they require some instruction or guidance, fall into the hands of quack "critics", who tell them the mss. need revision, but don't make these even good enough to earn a personal letter. I have worked with writers, who have spent an unconscionable amount for critics' fees and courses, with nothing to show for practical results. No critic can wave a wand and perform a miracle. Guiding a writer to a sale, inevitably is a difficult job. If the writer has his eye set on the slicks, it can be almost impossible, because so much depends, naturally, on talent, skilful use of it and proper timing. The right ms. at the "wrong" can be as futile as an amateur's "dud".

Of all the short-cuts, the most dishonest and cruelly disillusioning is that of ghost writers, who tell writers: "Give me the 'idea', I'll write it for you." I have seen a lot of this kind of writing, both before and after it has been "ghosted". Some of the so-called ghosting would be improved by having a grade school student edit it. I can assure you that while occasional single books have been edited, no worthwhile career has grown out of a collaboration between a writer and a ghost. There is no substitute for craftsmanship and an appreciation of what readers are interested in. A critic may help a writer to shorten his apprenticeship; an agent, too, may guide a writer, and a counseller's advice may save him time. But he has got to do the writing, and dream the dreams. He alone can take himself out of apprenticeship by learning how to write what he wishes and developing a practical program for writing.

REWRITE

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MAKE THE U.N. REALLY WORK!

William E. Harris,
Elva Ray Harris,
Editors.

CLEAN UP AMERICAN POLITICS

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SO MANY THINGS WE CAN DO

There are many things to be thankful for; although our world seems to be splitting open at the seams, this year we can be grateful for the fact that conditions in a large part of the world could be worse. But let us as we count up our blessings, take stock of our failings, too. Let us face squarely the jobs that confront us. If we see our several problems as such: individual obstacles—to be overcome, one by one, we shall avoid, in the long run, confusion, terror and despair.

The first and greatest problem today lies in knowing exactly what we mean by freedom, and human liberty. Do we mean it for only a small portion of the world population? Or do we believe in it wholeheartedly and consider that all peoples are entitled to it. We cannot, obviously, be our brother's keeper. But on the other hand we can take an unequivocal stand and let friend and foe know with unmistakable clarity, that if any people in this world want the kind of freedom we have, we are on their side. We did not do this in the case of Czechoslovakia, when the issues were cleancut.

Today, there are two forces at work in the world. They both stem from nationalism. One is outworn and selfish: the autocratic, the materialistic dictatorship of the Russians. The other is good, though possibly misdirected and untimely, world conditions being what they are. But certainly if we believe in our own forefathers and the right to self-rule, which they proclaimed, we must recognize the justice of the claims by Egypt, Iran, & all the other nations of the East that they must be allowed to govern themselves. This doesn't mean that we should pave the way for setting up dozens of weak, defenceless free states, which the Russians can easily gobble up. We must not endanger the freedom of those peoples who are already free. But we should be squarely on the side of even handed justice for all, and a progressive movement throughout the world in the direction of more self-determination on the part of all peoples.

Whether we like it or not, we have become stewards of liberty everywhere. We must exercise a degree of impartial wisdom and unselfishness the world has never known hitherto. On the one hand we must ward off barbarous attack from the self-seekers and organize the free world in an intelligent defense of its ideals. On the other we should mediate between the human and material rights of those who have governed their colonies & those who would now be free. With our skill and patience we must help each to help that opposite party, who appears so selfish.

It is time we strengthened the United Nations, not as a dominant, dictatorial organ of power, but as a central, cooperative agency capable of assisting the various nations to settle their differences amicably and to meet the emergencies of stressful living in a way that relieves much of the intensity & difficulty arising from such a sharp, poignant crisis as the Iranian oil squabble, and the Egyptian problem (it is much deeper than a mere misunderstanding over the ownership, and control of the Suez Canal). Today, we're beginning to treat as entirely natural that ancient custom of neighbors rallying around to help a sick or injured member of the community. And we are moving in the direction of settling disputes around a table instead of by strikes and violence. Why cannot we apply a similar wisdom to quarrels among states?

It is also time we strenthened our American version of the United Nations. I refer, of course, to our Congress and the respective legislatures. Congress is essentially a law-making body and a check on the judicial and executive parts of the Government. Over the years it has become saddled with countless other tasks. Congress should not as it now is, be taxed with numberless investigating excursions. There should be a non-partisan, non-governmentally controlled bureau or department, which could give an unbiased report to Congress, the President or the people direct, uninfluenced by politics.

Similarly, the legislatures should not be so bothered with much of the trivial permissive legislation necessary now to get small town or city tasks done. Congress and legislature alike should be able to concentrate, with wisdom and without the pressure of the lobbies upon what is best for the country & its various parts. Liberty is the result of friendly discussion, thought and agreement.

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

WORDS OF ADVICE TO A BEGINNER

A beginner needs a great deal of good advice. Because he is beginning, he has no basis of experience with which to weigh information and counsel. Whoever undertakes to offer advice to a newcomer in any field shoulders a great responsibility. It is serious business, as serious as giving the right steer to a child.

I have a good friend who can tell wonderful tales fabricated out of whole cloth. The children are enormously entertained and especially so because they know they are "wink" stories. My friend recognizes their inexperience and does not expect them to separate, so to speak, fact from fiction. She clearly indicates to them which is truth, and which is fabrication, by winking.

In the same manner I recognize the limitations of the beginner and in this article I shall try to give the best and truest advice I can for getting a start in writing poetry.

There is more than one kind of beginner.. First, let's talk about the type who has just completed a course in stained glass windows. Before that she did very well in a knitting class. And now she wants to take up something else, so she turns to poetry.

My advice to her is to find a good course in the appreciation of poetry. Nobody is the worse off for such a course, but all that any good teacher of the creative side of poetry can do is to help a poet to learn to express the poetry that is already inside of him. A teacher can't provide the spark. He can only help a person find the way to express the inspiration, so that it can be shared by him with others.

The subject of poetry is not to be compared with knitting or baby tending or a million other things which can be learned—from the bottom up when necessary. Knitting has to be done so that people can have warm garments to shut out the cold. Babies have to be cared for. Practical instructions can be given in both those subjects. But poetry does not have to be written. At least not by the people who are casting about for a "course" to fill up an evening a week. It doesn't have to be written unless one has a burning desire, an irresistible itch to express something he has got from what Anne Hamilton calls the "Beyondness". It does not have to be written—unless one feels compelled to share an emotional experience or poetic observation with another.

My advice to the person who asks me, "Where shall I get my inspiration?" is this. If the things you see and hear and feel and touch, yes, and taste, in your daily experience do not provide inspiration, you will be wasting your time trying to write poetry. By all means forget it. But do take that course in appreciation. There is a lot of enjoyment to be got out of that side of poetry. It helps writers, too, to have a discriminating audience.

To the mother whose family has progressed beyond the "constant care" stage, and who desires to add a bit to the family income—by writing and selling poetry, I would give this advice. The percentage of poets who earn an appreciable amount, is very small. There are other dignified occupations that pay a great deal more. Do investigate the possibilities of making stuffed animals for children, and lecturing to women's clubs.

The hardest type of beginner of all to advise is the one who needs to write poetry.. He needs to write not because he has "free" time to fill up, nor because he must earn a bit of pocket money. He needs to write—because he has things to say and feels a compelling urge to share them with others. I believe the quality which will help this poet more than anything else is patience. I would hesitate to thrust too many books of technique before him all at once, lest this academic aspect of the subject, necessary though it may be, should so overwhelm him, that it dull the spark which is vital, if he is going to write anything deeper than technically correct verse.

I would advise him to learn all he can about technique because that is his tool, and any workman can do better work if he possesses good tools and the skill to use them. But I would also advise him not to try to learn it all in a short time, lest when he has the good tool, the spark has been snuffed out because he has had no time to fan it, so busy has he been sharpening his tool.

I would advise him to write, write, write, whenever he feels compelled to, and never at such times to be a stickler for correctness. Let the inspiration come out in some form & let the poet be not too critical while he is learning. I would advise him not to be impetient to get his work into print, but to look at his first efforts and to know them exactly for what they almost certainly are: practice pieces. He should say: "All well & good. Now I will go and do better. I will not expect to be able to write for the general public and to compete with others, who have been writing much longer than I. Of course there are exceptions, but I will remember that the burden of proving that I am one is on me, until I have served a reasonable apprenticeship and have earned a reputation for competence and imaginative skill."

Finally, I would not advise this writer to be too content with his manner of expression. The middle road is often the hardest to take and to follow persistently. But that is one beginning writers should follow. The ancient moral of the hare & the tortoise is true.

A LESSON IN THINKING THROUGH

One of the most useful bits of know-how I have picked up for myself is the matter of a simple yardstick. Whenever I come to a problem I ask myself, what are the two extremes of this question? Does the hero give up, or does he win? Is it Red's story or Dorothy's? Should I write this story very short, medium or long? On the one hand ---? On the other ---?

The point is I try to get the picture and size up the two alternatives. Actually, the situation is broader than that. It is somewhat like the spectrum, which is broken up, running, as practically everyone knows, from red, orange and yellow to green, blue, purple and so back to red. Red and purple, naturally, are the two extremes. In between are the major differences we have mentioned. But like the compass, these can be further broken down. Red, red-orange, orange-red, etc.

A spectrum is a series of qualifying transitions. You move one degree at a time, one step leads to another and before your eyes, without your scarcely realizing it, "black" changes to "white". Change is the real basis of drama. But change that is suggested & then does not come up, can be just as dramatic. The hero enters a scene swearing he's going to kill the villain, and at the final moment he does not, perhaps does the direct opposite, makes friends with him. But in the space between these two extremes, he's been tested and made his great decision.

If you can enclose a scene, a story, or a decision on a technical matter concerning a story between the two poles, so to speak, a problem greatly simplifies itself. Then you can work out the details. Thinking through, turning this convenient yardstick over in my mind, has simplified and solved so many extraordinary problems for me. I have come to realize it is almost the cornerstone of the work I do with writing and in helping other writers.

It has become automatic for me to think in these terms whenever I face a decision on a technical problem, or a detail of plot. That is why I try to get all the facts, to set up the two poles and then work out the various steps between. It is why I lay so much stress on the inter-play of characters and the understanding of emotional relations. If you have a situation involving two persons, you really have two extremes, or you ought to. A thinks one way, B another. A scene develops as these two rub one another and the outcome of the scene is pushed in one direction or another.

But that raises still another aspect of this yardstick. In a spectrum you move all the way across—from one pole to the other. But a color organ that mixes color evenly, can move back and forth, choosing now red, now green or purple, or a mixed shading in between the primary colors. It is the same with a dramatic scene. Let's say one character wants Harold to stay on at the old family farm, another wishes him to go to the city. The scene poses the problem, sets up the suspensive question for the listener or reader as to which way the needle is going ultimately to spin. But it does not irrevocably point one way or the other immediately. It slithers tentatively towards one extreme, then the other as the two characters battle it out and seek to dominate with their emotions and wills.

The good writer has worked out all the angles of a dramatic scene, all the arguments pro and con. He knows that Martha will triumph in the end and that Harold will decide to go the city. But he does not let his audience know that until the last possible moment. He teases the reader, telling him the needle is certainly going to point at red & then saying, but no, there it goes in the direction of purple. One argument or emotional pressure sends it all the way over to orange, the next back to blue. And so it goes like a battle in a football game that moves from one 40-yard line to the opponents' 10-yard line, etc.

At WCS House we have many battle royals—when technical problems arise. A story perhaps ends tragically. Elva and I analyze it objectively and discuss the possibilities—often face to face with the author in a personal conference. The two poles are set up. We say, "Of course, you can't sell frustration to a slick magazine." The author counters with the fact that her ending is realistic or artistic. We say, "Well, how can we effect a compromise between you and the editor?" We explore the possible half-way measures between tragedy and the conventionalized happy ending. We decide whether we're purely interested in a sale, or an artistic and satisfying creative project. The author and Elva and I decide how much we wish to fight for what the author wants.

Sometimes, we find a way out that is good in everyone's opinion; sometimes we do not. Helen Hayes told us once about a play which at one time or another had 16 endings. The one finally adopted was a stop-gap one that pleased nobody. Sometimes, you can rephrase the implications, charge the scene or story with overtones that achieve the author's idea without frightening the audience away. A trick like that is creative writing, whether those behind the scenes actually do any of the writing or not. But it's achieved only by everyone discussing all the possibilities, kicking this particular idea around and "filling in" all the variations of the spectrum.

Perhaps I have shown you how Elva and I use this very valuable "yardstick and work out our problems.

> Failure to hit the bullseye is never the fault of the target. To improve your aim improve yourself. —*Arland.*

GOOD BUSINESS.

This means you!

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Charles Austin Beard Award, Alfred A. Knopf, 501 Madison Ave., NYC 22, will pay $500 and a book contract for books, in even years in Political Science and in odd years American History. Open to any citizen of the U.S. not now over 40 years of age at the time of the closing date. Purely scholarly works aren't desired. Length: 100,000 words preferred. A pamphlet and entry blank on request. Closes: July 31, annually. (Ms. complete and available for the printer must be in the publisher's hand at that time.)

Important Legal Ruling. Crown Publishers, who have issued a long list of books with a uniform series of titles, "New York Confidential", "Chicago Confidential", etc., recently sought an injunction to prevent the David McKay Co. from using the title "Baseball Confidential". Mr. Justice Hecht denied the motion on the grounds that the use of a common descriptive word could not be preempted and large areas of "legitimate activity" be limited. He did not find existence of property rights in the word "Confidential" when "used in the manner they (the plaintiffs, & their authors) have used it", flowing either from a common law trade mark, the acquisition of a secondary meaning, or the good will that the distinctive titles using the word "Confidential" have created. He ordered an early trial of the issues. So the courts eventually will decide whether "Baseball Confidential" has damaged the rights of anyone.

Poets will be grieved to hear that Harold Vinal, editor of VOICES, recently underwent an "eye operation which has impaired my sight to the point where it is impossible to read very much". It did not prevent him from issuing a 30th Anniversary number that carried the poems of many famous poets. Worth a careful reading.

Andrew Hickey, a member of the WCS Family, (his wife, Mary, was at one time Bill's secretary—and a good one, too) has just taken on the job of Worcester correspondent for the Boston GLOBE. This is in addition to his writing for WNBH, several trade journals, and a local paper in Shrewsbury, Mass. Mary has a teaching job at their church.

MODERN HOME NEWS, Pyrofax Gas Co., Union Carbide & Carbon Corp., 30 East 42nd St., N. Y.C. 17, pays $1 and uses your name on each item published in its Homemaker's Swap Club, (helpful home hints) & $1 under similar circumstances on another page for "My Favorite Recipe". It's a quarterly magazine & uses half-a-dozen or so items for each issue.

Quiz 'Em, Tom Henry, THIS WEEK, 420 Lexington Ave., NYC 17, pays, for each question and answer used, $2. Clipping of news source to be enclosed with every ms.

> The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher. —*Thomas Huxley.*

GOOD BUSINESS.

You Can Climb!

NEWS AND A SOURCE OF FACTS

Macrae Smith Co., Olga Edmond, 225 So. 15th St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. Miss Edmond is now editor-in-chief. She was formerly the editor of fiction at Westminster Press.

William Heinemann, Ltd., one of the great English publishing houses is investing in a small house, Martin Secker & Warburg. The idea behind this is to give the smaller publisher more capital and a wider promotion & distribution staff, yet leave it with power to publish literary writers such as: Edmund Wilson, H. G. Wells, Lewis Mumford, etc. An inflation pattern that may be followed over here.

State Publications. A member of the WCS Family asked us recently if we were aware of a valuable source of information not known to many writers. The reference was to publications issued by various state agencies. The N. J. Agricultural Experiment Station, Brunswick, N. J., for instance, issued in April, 1949, a very useful little pamphlet entitled "Tips for Scientific Writers". Everyone should read its eloquent plea for simple, effectively organized writing.

Each state has its own way of compiling & issuing publications. The State of Pennsylvania has a Bureau of Publications. It will supply you with a thick catalogue that lists the pamphlets and documents of many departments. The N. J. Dept. of Health, Trenton, N. J., issues a similar list of its own publications. The thing to do is to write to the seemingly appropriate department of whatever state you wish to get material from. If you hit it wrong, you will be referred to a correct source. Some of these pamphlets are distributed free, others for small sums. The Supt. of Public Documents, Gov't. Print. Office, Washington 25, D.C., is, of course, a source of even more data. GPO is one of the biggest publishers in the world.

Point is that you can get vast amounts of research material from these departments. A skilful writer can build many articles from the materials waiting for him on government shelves. At the very least, he can get good education and document the pieces, non-fiction or fiction, which he is working on and has perhaps developed from other sources. I am grateful to Mrs. Dorothy Wilson for suggesting that we touch on this subject again in REWRITE.

We Don't Acknowledge Checks. We don't acknowledge checks or postal orders sent in for renewals to REWRITE, or other WCS services. Time has become too valuable now for us to waste and to duplicate a receipt already in hand. But we never sidestep any friendly note that is enclosed with any remittance. We like to keep in touch with our friends. And friendship is a two-way job.

THAT OLD DEVIL, VIEWPOINT

One of the problems we noticed most often in the short stories we read at Durham this year was Viewpoint. The great majority of inperienced writers have failed to work out a satisfactory understanding of this technical device. And after all, you just cannot tell a story effectively unless you know exactly what you are doing. Especially in the matter of Viewpoint. For its the way that readers are enabled to participate in the story and experience it as if it were their own experience emotionally and intellectually.

The point is that an author must possess a philosophy regarding this problem. It isn't enough to have swallowed several textbooks. The writer must know why he selects a special viewpoint, one of several possible ones. He must have thought through not only a story, but his general attitude toward all stories. He must comprehend his relations with readers, with the imaginary single reader he writes for. He must see the beneficent help that viewpoint gives him in telling a story effectively.

Viewpoint is nothing more or less than an answer to the two most important questions, which every author faces every time he does a story. Whose story is it? And from whose angle shall I tell it? It may be A's story, and you will tell it from A's angle. But it may be more effective if you tell it as an eyewitness story from the angle of B, a person who participates in the story's action. Or as a passive observing character, C, may see it happen. And of course, if you tell it as A's own story, you may wish to keep a reader exclusively in the MC's mind & emotions, or you may desire to achieve a certain perspective.

At Durham I varied the trite idea of that famous "fly-on-the-wall" or the author somewhat, but only partially, omniscient, glancing over the MC's shoulder. I suggested the reader see the story from the viewpoint, let us say, of A, but the angle of the reader—i.e., the author—walking down the opposite side of the street from A. In other words,—a detached, more or less uninvolved position from which the reader can share A's concern but see in both directions up and down that street. He can see things that A cannot see. He gets an overall picture where A is bound by the interest of the moment alone.

Too many of the mss. we read both at Durham and elsewhere, do not locate the reader or the author or the MC precisely in any relation to Time and Space in the story. The author simply sets up his movie camera, and sound-track hap-hazardly and starts cranking fast or slow. There was one ms. at the Conference that simply changed viewpoints when it proved convenient. The story started for the reader in a wife's viewpoint, but shifted quickly with the husband, a salesman, to a distant city. Then, the author stepped in to tell a portion of the story in flat didactic comments at second hand. There were other viewpoints used, too, I think, but I can't recall them now. They may have been that of the wife's mother or her sister and child. I want to point out, however, that I have used the word "viewpoint" advisedly. For they were not merely shifts in the angle. It is fairly obvious that when the reader is taken inside the mind and emotions of more than one character; or is jerked from one line of interest in time and space, it is more than a shift of angle. The reader is asked to identify himself with a second or third character, and so materially shifts his camera-stand and his emotional loyalties. In this story the problem lay in the relations that existed between the man-and-wife. The author chose to tell the story from the angle of the wife. Therefore, to go into the emotions of the father or the little girl was to set up a new story line, even though it concerned the same general situation and problem in reverse.

This point of view which stresses the unity of story line is vitally important. You need to learn backwards and forwards what a story-line is, and be able to follow it from start to finish consistently and loyally before you try any tricks with multiple viewpoints, or even flashbacks. Until you've successfully told at least a dozen stories, in a straight forward line from start to final outcome, you as an inexperienced writer are in no position to shift viewpoints. And remember this rather startling fact: that the multiple viewpoint story is told from but a single angle.

I recall a serial by Isabel Moore that used the three viewpoints of the man, his wife and the woman he found he really loved. But it was told from the angle of the partially omniscient author, who watched the story unfold, but never intruded within the story's circle. Each time the viewpoint shifted, it still remained the husband's story. The author shifted in order to get the benefit of a "Strange Interlude" technique. Revealing the inner thoughts of all three of the main characters gave the story more impact. But every time that the viewpoint shifted, complete omniscience was avoided because the author did not go into the minds of all three characters at the same time. The reader was subjective to the temporary MC and objective to the other two. (He interpreted what they felt and thought by watching through the MC's eyes and ears what they did & said.) And the angle was always that of the story-teller—an unseen observing character, walking down the other side of the street from the principle MC, the husband.

This principle of keeping unity in a story, even though the viewpoint is shifted, is what the inexperienced writer rarely grasps. Isabel Moore shifted viewpoints in order to further explore the husband's problem. But she kept to her single angle throughout.

NEWS HERE AND THERE

SEVENTEEN, Tess Williams, Press Ed., Short Story Contest, 488 Madison Ave., NYC 22, announces its 6th annual awards of $500, $200 and three $100 for stories between 2,000 and 3,500 words by authors between 13 & 19 years of age. No limit on the number of stories to be entered by any one contestant. Mss. not winning will be automatically considered by the editors for use in the "It's All Yours" Department. Closes: Dec. 15, 1951. Winning stories will be announced in the April, 1952 issue, and will be run in the above department, May issue.

BLUE BOOK, Maxwell Hamilton, 230 Park Ave, NYC 17. We wrote to Mr. Hamilton a few days before he assumed editorship on Oct. 1st. He replied that he hadn't "got his feet wet yet but we will certainly avail ourselves of your kind invitation to let writers know about our plans.

"We hope to develop BLUE BOOK into a really fine market for upcoming young, American writers. I think we will be offering a market which in no way will duplicate anything now being done in the men's field."

ACTION NOW, Richard L. Rooney, S.J., 3115 So. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 18, Mo., pointed out to a prospective contributor recently it is the organ of the Catholic Sodality movement. Therefore, "Our policy hews very close to the Sodality line."

When A New Editor Takes Over. The new setup at BLUE BOOK points a problem for a writer who is earnestly trying to hit it. Suppose you are a regular contributor, who has been hitting the magazine at frequent intervals. When a new editor comes in it means a serious adjustment for you and the editor—a possible severe loss in your income, if he decides not to use your type of material. A writer at such a time proves his character, both as a writer and a salesman. I know many writers, who simply throw up their hands at such a turn of events. "Oh, dear, my man is out. Now I'll never be able to hit my favorite market again. The new guy will have his own crowd; he won't want me." Etc.

But let's look at it from the editor's angle. He may be a cocky, self-assured guy, a chap with new ideas. Or he may just be window-dressing for the publisher, who clamps a heavy hand on the helm. He has to print the type of stories the publisher wants. We all know certain magazines that have been guided for many years by one man, sometimes the publisher, more often the editor. The POST was that kind of a magazine for many years. There was a difficult adjustment to make at the end of Lorimer's stewardship.

A magazine may have stood for something, a certain type of publication in its field over a long period of years. Time and passage of events may have left it on the beach. The sad plight of the old ST. NICHOLAS & YOUTHS COMPANION and The AMERICAN BOY are all outstanding examples of failure of the management, or of successive editors, or even of a group of writers to make the necessary step of adjustment to changing times.

So when a new editor steps into a popular publication's editorial office, he may well be as frightened as you. He may be starting under the shadow of a great editor; his job may be to chart a new course, or pull a sagging circulation up and win back advertisers who have lost confidence; or find a better, more profitable medium elsewhere. There are all sorts of possibilities, and it is up to you as a writer to size up the situation in the correct manner. Of course if the new editor is one who wants you to fawn and praise him, you'd better try to open up a new market. But in that case I advise you to "jump ship" only because the life of the magazine won't be long or healthy.

Ordinarily, if you have been hitting this book regularly, the thing to do is hold out a friendly hand and offer to help in any way you can, then give the new editor an opportunity to size up the situation. If you are an old contributor, or a new one, the practical strategy is not to bother the new editor too much with a whole lot of queries or mss. Don't try to rush in and shout: "Here's my chance to get on the gravy-train, get out of the way all you other free lancers. Me, Me, Me!" No, the practical thing is to make a careful analysis of the old policies, and the new, and what differences seem to be arising. Then see if you can't work up an idea that is appropriate and compelling. Read the guy's mind, in other words, and help him to clarify it. Give him something he'll wish he'd thought up himself. He'll buy it quick

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We also sell a No. 6¾ (3 5/8 x 6½) envelop (white). It's light weight, just the thing for filing notes, even letters where writing is folded inside. Cost? 75¢ per 100, postage extra. (But weight is less than a pound.)

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NEWS IN THE MARKETPLACE

An Asia-America Literary Project. Wallace Stegner & Miss Frances Fisher, Dept. of English, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., are planning to "introduce the work of Asian writers to American readers. Emphasizing the work of contemporary writers, the dept. that is being set up in the PACIFIC SPECTATOR, will print an essay on some phase of literature in Asia and a translation from work by an Asian writer."

Natural History Book Club has been bought from the Am. Museum of Natural History by the Beechhurst Press, a subsidiary of W.M. Jackson, Inc. Latter has several South American subscription book publishing branches, while Beechhurst Press owns and operates a number of other specialized book clubs. (Note: the quick denial of this item in the PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY was made by Ray C. Dovell, president of the Club, who stated that control of the Club is held by Ward Melville, president of the Melville Shoe Corp., who is the largest single stockholder, under a 5-year trust agreement.)

We could have eliminated the first part of the above paragraph. We felt that it was an excellent objective lesson in how misinformation slips into usually reliable editorial sources. We get a lot of letters from an amazingly large number of writers, who read market reports in the writers' magazines. A ms. has been shot blind at a likely market. But it turns out to be unreliable, gives no report, or refuses to pay promptly.

The point is that in many of these cases, we don't even have to refer to our files to report that the market is well known as one of the "stinker" variety. It is the latter, unfortunately, that are often the most publicity minded. It is said that "haste makes waste". I would add that blind acceptance of the reports in a few writers' magazines usually leads to trouble. A letter to the market, asking if the information currently appearing in such a magazine is accurate, has saved us many hours of trying to clear up a misunderstanding in a great many cases.

It has got so that we check almost all of the items that come to us, even from valued correspondents, unless they are original documents. A letter or a rejection slip signed by an editor is obviously authentic most of the time. But a report summarized by a writer from his actual experience or from a report in a magazine may not be so reliable.. It is very easy to alter the facts unintentionally when you set them down on paper, as we have found out again and again when we're transcribing information.

And REWRITE seeks to give writers just as accurate data as is humanly possible. That's why we've had so many reports of sales. Capable writers make good use of the reports & eliminate several chances for error.

SOME CONTESTS AND MORE MARKETS

The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tenn., offers $7,500 for a ms. that will "accomplish the greatest good for the Christian faith and Christian living among all people". Of this sum $5,000 is outright award, the balance an advance on royalties. The judges are distinguished Christian leaders. Closing date not given. Book will be published in the fall of 1952.

KALEIDOGRAPH, Whitney & Vaida Stewart Montgomery, 624 No. Vernon Ave., Dallas 11, Texas, had a listing of its payments in prizes in the September issue. This is one of a very few poetry magazines that have been published for more than 20 years. One $25 prize in each quarter (it's a monthly magazine); and $1 each month for the best poem in a number of special classes. Quite a few more prizes are given by poets and others as their contribution to the support of the magazine. A prize book publication contest is also sponsored once a year in the spring.

The Anonyme Workshop, Leta Meston, contest editor, Mill Valley, Calif., offers $15, $10 and $5 for original poems on your own theme Entries must be made anonymously to: Mr. G. M. Jackson, 32 Edgewood Ave., Mill Valley., Calif. Closes: Nov. 10, 1951. (Note: as the news releases of these activities are usually made too close to the deadlines of writers' magazines, so that contestants are allowed only a brief time to prepare mss., we strongly urge poets to become members of this organization. The dues are very nominal. Then they will receive notices earlier.)

Widening Market for Books. Doubleday & Co. has extended its "Two Books In Every Hotel-Room" gimmick, which was tried out at Hotel Stevens in Chicago, to 15 hotels. If guests wish to own the books, they simply ask that they be charged on their bill. Guest then becomes automatically a member of the Doubleday book club by which the book is selected The Company's business is increased, but also many persons who might not otherwise receive active contact with books, are started on a career of reading, or at least some interest in books.

More Re: Dr. J. E. Schmidt. Since we wrote the paragraph about his "Vocabulary Guide", on another page, he has informed us that it is a hobby with him and that he doesn't make a charge for supplying a word, or for whatever service he offers. A successful physician, he states, "I am not dependent upon my vocabulary studies for my living."

Batting Average Column Grows Longer. Anyone who has read the "Batting Average" column in REWRITE recently, must have observed that it is growing longer. We believe writers in the WCS family are shooting carefully at markets they are familiar with, loading their guns with ideas and stories which they can handle authoritatively. It helps.

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Mrs. John P. Taylor
Correspondence: POULTRY HERALD
Short Filler: CHECKERBOARD NEWS.

Frances Durland
Story: FORWARD.

Lucile Coleman
Story: Catholic HOME JOURNAL.
Poems: N.Y.HERALD TRIBUNE, Syracuse POST STANDARD, FLORIDA SPEAKS, The OREGONIAN and The ARCHER.

Gilean Douglas
Articles: ARIZONA HIGHWAYS, WORLD OUTLOOK. (These are new markets for him. He gets a number of other acceptances every week.)

Helen Langworthy
Articles: Michigan STATE JOURNAL, Specialty SALESMAN, C.S.MONITOR, St. ANTHONY'S MONTHLY, THIS DAY.

Peggie Schultz
Articles: MINN. HORTICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, POPULAR GARDENING.

F. Louis Friedman
Articles: POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY, NATION'S BUSINESS, etc.

Florence M. Davis
Juvenile Story: CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

Florence H. Plumstead
Miscellaneous: in 2 years she has sold, she tells us, 113 ms., 83 pictures, and some quizzes, poems, etc., all over the religious field:)

Carrie Esther Hammil
Poems: WESTMINSTER (2nd prize, Summer), GRADE TEACHER. WESTMINISTER, again.

Josepha Murray Emms
Poems: Kansas City Poetry, Am. BARD and Hartford TIMES.

Mildred Revercomb
Article: PROFITABLE HOBBIES.

Thelma S. Douglas
Articles: PARENTS'. (Sept. & October).

Note: send in your reports of work you've placed, with our help or independently. Members of the WCS Family learn much from such notices of what editors are buying. The editors, too, watch what you are doing.

Tell us what market data you glean from a rejection slip or editorial letter; or from experiences with any services for writers. A report from you may save another writer much trouble or wasted time. You help us thus to report the entire writing & selling field.

NATURALISM CAN BE DULL

I have been reading some short stories by a young modern writer who has received fine notices from the critics for his thoughtful writing and literary style. He is a skilful writer and an excellent technician. But his style is often that of a pulp writer in the sense that he uses flat, objective sentence structure a good part of the time. He does not employ the emotional sensationalism, the over-writing of the pulp writer. On the contrary, it is subtly objective, impersonal realism somewhat in the Hemingway manner. He lets the dialogue and the action speak out, for itself, you might say.

But an endless succession of simple, noncompound sentences make for monotony. Every character tends to sound like every other & each story resembles the other. You do not, I found, realize how much you appreciate the rise and fall of emotion and rhythm in stories until you read this kind of fiction.

AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, Nelson Antrim Crawford, Boulder, Colo. Mr. Crawford, the former editor of HOUSEHOLD, has taken over A&J from its previous editors. He aims to edit, he says, for reader interest and practicality. He has much editorial and writing know-how to contribute. The October issue stressed an invitation for readers to send in similar material, no terms of payment mentioned. It will be a fine thing if he can clear up the good name of A&J by cleaning out the advertising columns, which achieved a rather unenviable deterioration during the post war years in line with certain other writer trade magazines. Writers, more than others, need sound professional papers.

Juvenile Syndicate. Last April we printed in REWRITE an authoritative piece about this. It was written by Sewall B. Jackson, manager of the Methodist Publishing House's plan for reselling fiction and non-fiction which they buy. This article has been in demand & we have sent out quite a number of copies. A small over-run of the issue remains if anyone desires to read it. Send 25¢ in stamps, or coin.

REWRITE has received a number of friendly and unsolicited recommendations in national magazines or bulletins. We are grateful for these published expressions of confidence.

Unusual Back-log. One of our long term subscribers, B. Coursin Black, 1216 64th St., S. W., Byron Center, Mich., has an unusual way of earning a living. He is a free lance professional publisher's proofreader. He does it by mail.

Old Fashioned, But Eternal. Many writers worry that the old eternal truths will alter. It is still smart, though, to have a simple and specific "Narrative Problem" in each and every story you write. In articles, too. It intrigues the reader, you know.

THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP COMPANION. Gorham Munson. Farrar, Straus & Young. $3.00. A successor to the author's earlier book regarding writing, "THE WRITTEN WORD", this is one of the most thoughtful and intelligent literary studies of various technical problems we have seen in a long time. Munson is able to combine the literary and the practical to a remarkable degree. He covers both fiction and non-fiction, and his chapters on "Varieties of the Storyable" and the practical editor's viewpoint on mss. are very helpful to the inexperienced writer. To those of us who have been on the inside, too. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

MANY ARE CALLED. Edward Newhouse. Wm. Sloane Associates. $3.75. A collection of 42 tales (some of them seem hardly more than that) by a "young" writer in the sense that they are all dated since 1939. They are unusual, too, because all but three were published by The NEW YORKER. The impact on the reader is often deceptive because of the simple, realistic style and the objective use in a fairly large number of the stories of a viewpoint, which combines the personal with the impersonal. Many of the stories are told by some one, either a visible or invisible character or the author posing as an observer. Yet the author is never within sight; the points of the various stories are generally achieved, very subtly, by implication. His background also is the harsh, nervously taut, distraught world we have been living in since 1939. An excellent study book for any serious craftsman in the short story field. Most novelists would benefit by examining the economic use of words.

RECENT AND NEW EDITIONS

RADIO & TELEVISION WRITING. Max Wylie $6.50. A standard book by a practicing radio man & recently revised to cover TV. We recommend it highly.

A READER FOR WRITERS. Ed. William Targ. The first in a new and practical series for the serious writer. An exciting collection of a number of hard-to-come-by pieces about many aspects of writing. Every writer should read it thoroughly.

Duplicate Subscriptions. Many writers like to cut and file portions of their REWRITES. So, we will send a duplicate copy to the same address every month for a year for only $1. Total cost, subscription & duplicate, $3.00

Sample copies: 2 for 25¢. Back copies: 10 copies for $1.00. Don't forget to renew on time. It helps us to help you.

Take Care! Buy new books about TV slowly. A lot of them are quickies, no good. The medium is changing so rapidly that only those, which deal with fundamentals, are good. Rest are worthless, will be out of date soon.

BOOKS OF PERMANENT WORTH

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. Herschel Brickell.. $3.00. Handbook of the UNH Conference. Covers a wide number of fields. Bill has chapters on the Short Story and Critics, Agents, and their relation to writers. Good book.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. $4.00. WRITERS' BOOK CLUB is the exclusive American agent. A very practical and helpful book. Were proud of the fact that through our efforts it has been made available to writers at $4.00 instead of the original price of $7.00. English in background, it is universal in application. We recommend it.

WRITING THE CONFESSION STORY. Dorothy Collett. $2.50. This book is a sound one, helpful to the general fiction writer as well as the Confession specialist. We recommend it.

HOW TO WRITE FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT. Ed. Warren Bower. $4.95. Handbook. In spite of an unappealing title, this is a good book. The wide coverage is made possible by excellent specialized chapters, written by experts or big name writers. We recommend it highly.

THE MATURE MIND. Harry Overstreet. $3.50. A truly great mind formulates principles that are equally applicable to writing as well as living. Every writer will be a better writer for reading it. An essential book.

ARTICLE WRITING & MARKETING. George I. Bird. $5.50. A practical book for the professional writer and the beginner. The author, and his students have sold widely.

THE CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers. $5.50. Companion book on fiction. Good.

WRITING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Mabel Louise Robinson. $2.75. A fine book by the leader, and herself an active practitioner, of the Columbia University Fiction Workshop. She has written many books of fiction and non-fiction. This one about writing for older 'teen agers, has been recommended each year at the UNH Conference for several years by another juvenile writer, who has also expanded into the adult field, Elizabeth Yates. A practical and helpful book.

Buy your books through WRITERS' BOOK CLUB and save money by earning Book Dividends. A fine way to build a library and help finance your favorite magazine. (We accept no advertising so that we can report every aspect of the writing business impartially and protect your best interests.)

The WCS Circulating Library makes most of the best books about writing available to you for only $2 per year, plus postage each way. You have a month to read a book, excluding, of course, time for transportation.

RENEW Your Subscription Promptly, Please!

REPORT ON THE PROSE WORKSHOP

The writers who are interested in writing for the workshops really got busy this past month. Ten short short stories were sent in and many of them were interesting. It's too bad that we all cannot gather in a room and read them and discuss them. I know that the experience would be stimulating. And rewarding to all of us.

Future Workshops: No. 6. Dramatic Scene.. (Nov. 10th, discussion in December issue.)

No. 7. "Why I Want to Write." (200 words, or less. Dec. 10th. $1 for one used. Criticism of Short Short Story used in Nov. must accompany every entry.

No. 8. A Fiction Transition. This may be a transition (1) from one scene to another or (2) back into a flashback; or (3) forward to the main part of a story from a flashback.. Length: not over 150 words. This is a large amount of space. Actually, it should be accomplishable in much fewer words. What I'd like to see is the high point of the beginning scene and the first line or two of the second, with whatever means of articulation you use to hitch the two together. Closes: Feb. 10th. $1 will be paid for those used.

Please note that we are not having a workshop closing in January. We believe holiday activities would interfere. So you have the best part of 2 months to prepare for No. 8. I hope every entry will give us the feeling of a real scene in each fragment, and quick and authoritative transition. You should be familiar with transitions in published stories. Perhaps the best effect of this workshop will be to send you to professional examples for careful study. Too many stories, which come in to WCS show little of the conviction and authority in writing that even a bad published story contains.

Report on No. 5. First a general criticism of the various stories submitted. At least one of the stories failed: it was not "convincing". Mrs. Julia F. Polinski's ms. pictured a group of turkeys vying for the honor of being killed for Thanksgiving Dinner. Amusing and with a moral well suited to Sunday School papers, it did not quite go over because we can't believe that turkeys think in human terms. Another weakness was due to the fact that everyone does not consider the largest bird the best. The fantasy is good, but the story would have to be reangled, so that the improbabilities could be used with a tongue-in-cheek impishness instead of being a weakness, as now. It could be done.

Another story, which was also humorous—I was very pleased to see writers getting away from too much seriousness—was about a wife who tried to teach her husband, just recently freed from mother's apron-strings, a lesson. The lesson backfired and the story almost a pip, failed because the issues & the logic were not crystal clear and so the ending did not punch home. If the author fixes this, she ought to be able to sell the story, which is one reason we have not used it.

Another story, in fact, several of them, I found rather stiff. The style was not easy, informal and dramatized. (Some of the lines in the radio drama, "The Greatest Story Ever Told", were atrociously stiff yesterday, (Oct. 21st). This is something to cultivate—it can often mean the difference between an acceptance and rejection.

Still another story that had terrific suspense value and a real punch, failed for me because (1) the viewpoint was confused, and the story turned on a letter jamming so the address could be read, in a mail-chute. That the elevator and the chute should both stick at the same time, seems just too convenient for the author's purposes.

Several stories had interesting plots but missed fire because they were told too much by the author, or did not project the characters sufficiently. Nameless figures somehow always seem weak. Now here is the story we have picked for analysis. We have picked it because it offers a number of opportunities for constructive criticism. Go to it:

THE CLUB MEETING

By Emily R. Page

Making her way toward the imposing house, where the meeting was to be held, Marcia Blakeslee hurried to catch up with three women on the steps. But the door closed behind them, and Marcia was left to make her own entrance. Firmly renewing her resolve to attend meetings, until the experience was so familiar to her that she would lose her awkward embarrassment, she timidly poked the bell button.

In the bedroom, where she had been directed to leave her coat, Marcia lingered, hoping to drift along with two women earnestly talking there. But she began to feel like a forlorn puppy hopefully awaiting a kind word. Quickly, she left, alone.

In the living room, Marcia sat beside a woman she had met.

"Was that your daughter with you in the library?"

Grateful to be spoken to, Marcia eagerly replied, "Yes, it was."

"She's a beautiful child."

Marcia smiled shyly. She could not properly agree. A mere "Thank you" might sound smug. The thing to do was to show interest in the other woman. She could ask if she had children. But the woman had turned to speak to someone else.

A cat passed under the chairs, and, quick-

ly, Marcia reached down to pet him. The diversion inspired a short conversation about cats with the woman on her right.

During the meeting, Marcia could relax, but the tea afterwards meant more chatting. Women nodded at her absent-mindedly, but always spotted someone beyond her with whom they had important matters to discuss.

As long as she could keep busy with the tea and cookies, Marcia felt she was not too conspicuous. When they were gone, she did not want to step to the table, greedily, for more. She stood miserably with the empty cup & saucer.

She ought to join a group. Marcia realized she couldn't expect to be sought out. She must take the initiative. She went to stand beside kind Mrs. Richards, who had escorted her to the first meetings, when she was new in town. But she couldn't just break into the deep conversation in which Mrs. Richards was engrossed. Standing on the fringe, waiting a chance to speak, Marcia began to feel like an eavesdropper. She felt a warm blush creep over her face and down her arms.

To seem uninterested in the conversation, that was not hers, Marcia turned her eyes out the window. A member was hurrying down the walk. Evidently, some appointment or some business of importance forced her to leave early. If only Marcia had some good reason for leaving now!

Suddenly, she thought that, for all anyone knew, or would inquire, she, too, had an urgent engagement elsewhere. Decisively, Marcia set down her cup and went upstairs—for her coat.

Pulling on her gloves, Marcia hurried down the stairs, opened the door, and purposefully strode down the walk, the picture of apoised, but busy, woman, off to the next event on her calendar.

There you have it. The Short Short Story. Miss Page awaits your comments. Please send them in before Dec. 10th if possible. They'll be forwarded to the author, who has received the $1 award. The more help you give, the more you will get from thinking these problems through, and also from others when it's your turn.

Poetry Workshop. See the October issue for the poem to be discussed in December. We'll reprint it again in that issue, when we record the comments upon it.

The Poetry Page is a reprinted one in the current issue (this issue). For the reasons see next column. This is the first time Elva has taken a "leave" since November, 1945, when she began writing on the "Fundamentals of Good Poetry".

Please RENEW your subscription promptly—it helps us to give you a better magazine.

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE & AN EDITORIAL

October was not a very pleasant month for us at WCS House, in spite of the lovely Indian summer days that interspersed themselves among the cold, wet ones, which have plagued New England since late winter. Bill began things by lugging too many cement blocks for our new cesspools. He slipped his sacroiliac out of place and managed to get a bad cold in it into the bargain. Before he managed to get fully back on his feet, Billy'Gee caught a mean cold and had to take penicillin to nip an ear infection. Then Elva, who'd been a heroic nurse to two patients, caught the extra mean cold now going the rounds. It seems to be a merry-go-round of sore throat, stiff neck, sinus and general pain in any of the weak spots one may have.

All in all it was not a month we care much about. It will explain why a few pages in REWRITE this month are reprinted from some of the earlier issues. Also, why REWRITE is going to reach you a few days late this month. But as Thanksgiving Day approaches we treasure our blessings. For we live in the country and have moved far along the trail of improving our home with refinements for better, happier living and more efficient counsel for our many friends throughout the wide world. (As I write this several bluebirds & half-a-dozen goldfinches danced about on the flat roof of our new sunroom beside my window. It's a pretty nice world, if the politicians and rain-makers would leave it alone!)

Political Prospects. We believe in the two party form of democratic government. We also believe in the power of the individual to keep the two parties clean and virile. We believe that the great mass of decent, honest American citizens are filled with revulsion at the deterioration of the once great Democratic party. We believe at its next presidential convention it should completely and irrevocably repudiate "Trumanism". History, we believe, will write this down as a lower and more despicable political chicanery than "Boss Tweedism" ever was.

There is a name for those who betray their country in time of war. American Communists have made it applicable to other men and women operating in time of alleged peace. But such a name and the punishment: death by firing squad or by hanging by the neck—until dead, is too good for the shabby self-seekers who pilfer the pockets and betray a trust placed in them by their fellow citizens. We believe that politicians of both major parties should be made to understand in unmistakable language, that the American People, although long suffering and patient, desire these filthy swine rooted out, punished and their names inscribed on a list of persons, who shall forever be barred from holding any public office again. After all, no man wants or can stand the punishment of final ostracism by his fellow men. We need to stress again the importance of simple honesty.

NEWS ON SEVERAL FRONTS

CORONET, John Barkham, 488 Madison Ave.., NYC 17, will send an authors' leaflet, "What CORONET Wants". Get one before you shoot!

IT'S HANDY, American AGRICULTURIST, Box 367, Ithaca, N. Y., pays $2 for each labor-saving gadget or idea it uses. Mss. aren't returned except on request. Rough sketch is often a good way to clinch a sale.

Federal Trade Commission. Complaint issued against Directory Publishing Corp. & Business Directory Corp., Brooklyn, N.Y. Clips of other advertising media allegedly used in an unfair method to mislead advertisers into thinking they are simply renewing an adv. already placed.

Publishers, Attention. Longtime subscriber to REWRITE, B. Cousin Black, seeks contact for editorial work. Proofreading.

Author's Notebook. "The Story Behind 'The President's Lady'", a 24-page booklet of the notes made by Irving Stone for his new biographical novel, has been issued in a limited edition by Doubleday & Co., 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22. (We've requested a copy, to be used in the WCS Circulating Library.

The "Vocabulary Guide". An apparently new and unique word book has been devised by Dr. J. E. Schmidt, a recent member of WCS Family. It is a "dictionary of meanings" which, in reversal of the usual procedure, are arranged alphabetically and followed in every case by the correct and suitable word. Thus there are some 50 phrases built around such a key word as "adorn". Each has its identifying word. Effect is that a writer having a general idea he wishes to express in a word, has a better chance of putting his finger on the exact word. Like any word book, this one has its limitations, but it does act ingeniously as a short-cut for writers. The book not yet printed, Dr. Schmidt says he is devoting part of each day answering questions. (The book will require a year to print. We have put in for a review copy.) His address: 2924 Brighton St., Baltimore 16, Md.

"The Crime of Genocide". From the Serbian National Defense Council of America, we have received a pamphlet too horrible to read. It is a plea by Americans of Serbian descent to their fellow citizens to urge the US Senate to ratify the United Nations' Genocide Convention. (It came into force in January 1951, but the United States has not yet ratified, nor even brought out on the floor of the Senate the ratifying resolution.) Twenty million persons are estimated to have been victims of this type of mass murder and torture in the last 50 years. Russia, according to this pamphlet, has fought to emasculate the Convention and make it apply to lynching or strike disorders in the United States. But no Christian can deny the need for gradual, progressive legislation for the preservation of human rights and the elimination of racial fears and cruelties. Spiritual rearming no less than military and economic is an absolute necessity. For the United States unquestionably to stand up and be counted—on the side of decency; to implement its principles with positive action, would, without any doubt, make friends for us behind the Iron Curtains and lead eventually to a lessening of world tensions. (Address as above: 54 W. Randolph St., Chicago 1, Ill.

"The Practical Book of American Silver" & "Old Silver For Modern Settings", by Edward Wenham, Alfred A. Knopf, are two useful titles for the researcher. The wise writer of feature articles, and the fiction writer, is often able to save himself a lot of time by "pinning down" in his files the names of any source materials of this kind, that he will some day wish to lay his hands on in a hurry.

REWRITE Gets a Boost. Too late for a comment last month, one of our subscribers under the by-line "Hidden Pathways", published in the Boston Sunday POST an exceptionally approving "plug" for REWRITE. For days we were swamped with dozens of inquiries. Quite a number of additions to the WCS Family resulted. We are grateful to such friends as "Hidden Pathways" and Muriel Caswall, the kindly editor of the POST's Household pages.

American Civil Liberties Union. A book by Merle Miller analyzing the methods of twin-publications, RED CHANNELS and COUNTERATTACK will be published early in 1952 by Doubleday & Co. ACLU assisted in the preparation of the report this book constitutes. It is vitally important subversives shall not get control of any avenue of communication. It is also important that the basic principles of free speech shall never be limited, intentionally or otherwise, by over-zealous blacklisting or other forms of indirect censorship. A book of this type, or even those published, and widely distributed, by the above organizations, are valuable, so long as they present the facts on both sides of a problem & permit the public to make up its own mind—without benefit of editorial prejudice, insinuation or loaded evidence.

Federal Trade Commission. A complaint issued against Regal Collection Service, Detroit, Mich., for misrepresentation allegedly in the sale of "skip-tracer" postcards.

Franklin Pierre Davis Contest, James Neill Northe, 318 N.E. 9th St., Oklahoma City, Okla., has been announced. Last years prizes were $5, $3 and $2. Closes: July 1, 1952. To get full particulars, address as above.

McGraw-Hill Book Co., C. Gibson Scheaffer, 330 West 42nd St., NYC 18, & Parents' Institute (publishers of PARENTS') have announced a joint book publishing program, a series by authorities in child guidance for families with growing children.

COUNT TEN BEFORE YOU ASK FOR HELP

I have noticed recently what a lot of unnecessary questions we have had to answer. A rule of thumb is that no editor likes to be required to write a writer's stories for him. When I was breaking in as a reporter, I was constantly being told by my city editor todo this or that. Sometimes it was to get a story, with very few instructions as to where, or how. Sometimes it was merely to go to an editor in some other part of the building & give him a note, or get a bit of information. The two newspaper offices I learned my business in were regular rabbit-warrens carved out of decrepit combinations of ancient office buildings that should have been wrecked or burned down long since, if only to reduce the rat population. Well, I early discovered the way the other reporters handled matters was to get out of the Presence, but quickly, and then either think out the job, or ask someone else for the answers. People in far corners of the building, or down the street were always glad to fill in an inexperienced lad's knowledge of how to go, and what to do. And if you came back with copy, and did it quickly, the city editor wouldn't say anything, but he would remember.

Incidentally, another angle to this whole problem is the ability to get your instructions the first time, on the wing. I always grabbed a wad of copy-paper and jotted down on it the basic facts of the assignment before I left the office. Pat King, one of the star reporters and feature men in the POST's office at the time (he'd worked his way all the way around the world on newspapers several times), saw me do that once and said I would be a "good man some day". Most reporters, he informed me, either tried to remain out of sight when the city editor motioned, or yelled; or they listened with their eyes and did not get the instructions straight.

I often recall those memories as I hand a suggestion to some writer and watch him pick it up or foozle it. Repeatedly, I tell this person or that he or she could write a certain type of story. Back comes a letter, to ask me for the names and addresses of magazines using that type of story. If I was in that writer's shoes, I would have some market lists, and when the general field of let us say juveniles, or hobby magazines is mentioned, I'd do a little digging. Sometimes it takes years for an idea we toss into one writer's lap to "explode" and result in action. Again, we have to draw it all out for another writer in two-letter words.

No one objects to answering sensible questions, or questions that show that an author is going to work and making progress. But Commonsense is a wonderful gift. My point is that many of the writers who ask us foolish and unnecessary questions prove that they're not so much interested in writing, as in being known as "writers" in Gorham Munson's happy phrase. So, think before you wring your hands.

SEE LIFE CLEAN AND TRUE AND WHOLE

A PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY questionnaire regarding the state of the book business not long ago brought a resulting story in PW headed, "Dull Plots and High Prices Threaten Sales of Fiction". The sale of books, but particularly fiction, have been way off this year. In addition, the trend of many big circulation magazines has been towards more non-fiction features and less fiction. Many bookshops report that their sales are confined to a few popular titles.

One thought is that novelists have looked too much on the dark, pessimistic side, and paint a negative picture of America. It is true that many writers have served time and have been emotionally upset in war service. Careers have been stopped in mid-flight. But one wonders if this is wholly to blame. The real world makes so many demands upon us, & disturbs us with its insistent realities, according to Edward Aswell, editor at McGraw-Hill Book Co. On the other hand Lee Barker, of Doubleday & Co. feels that first novels, in particular, lack story value. REWRITE is in agreement with this theory. Perhaps we're low-brows or just old fashioned; but if the modern story-teller would live up to his title, he would achieve a wider audience, and sounder popularity with editors. It takes a lot of brains and imagination to write suspensive, dramatic, entertaining stories. It doesn't take nearly so much to write episodic, intellectual, tragic frustration. Before you can put on the cream of high-brow ratiocination into a story, you have to lay the keel, so to speak of emotional entertainment that catches the eye and holds the interest of readers at all levels. Only the pseudo "intelligentsia" look down their noses at emotion in art. (The same thing, of course, applies to the mentally disturbed or maladjusted. And perhaps some day the powers that be who start wars, will realize that you can't raise the kind of hell we've been raising in the past 35 years, without upsetting mental equilibrium in most of the peoples throughout the world. Some day the big industrialists may appreciate that people are better, more vigorous customers when there is a degree of stability and security in the world. It is easy money to sell to governments that waste and destroy as fast as they buy, but a larger profit, with fewer ulcers are achieved in times of peace.)

If you doubt the efficacy of story value, switch over to music. Look at the way melody and musical stories continue, year after year, to hold up against jive: "Blossom Time" and "The Student Prince", to cite but two. A thought that ties in with Gladys Hasty Carroll's impassioned plea at the Rural Reading Conference in Washington for "Something Fit for Rural Readers to Read". To this we completely agree. There is so much drama in America, so many great stories of achievement and character fulfillment, there is no place for the dramatic garbage we get on radio & TV.

ARE EDITORS HITTING THE MARK?

In her speech before the Rural Reading Conference in Washington, Gladys Hasty Carroll listed these types of books as the ones the readers in rural areas keep away from:

(1) Non-fiction that they consider dry, hard to understand or depressing.

(2) Fiction they consider obscene, horrible or depressing.

(3) Books which cost too much to be disposed of after one reading, but which are definitely not worth reading twice.

(4) Poetry they cannot understand.

(5) Books which seem to them to have no connection whatever with them—non-fiction that does not tie in with any truth they know; or fiction lacking characters with whom they can identify themselves.

Here on the contrary are the books Gladys believes rural readers seek:

(1) Non-fiction which is clear, vital & inspirational. They want to know more about a projected future for the world they want to believe in, and more about whatever part they can play in building a fellowship of nations. They want readable biographies of men & women they can respect and admire whether the subjects are famous or just good private citizens.

(2) Fiction which seems to them potentially true and worthwhile; about characters which they feel better for having met; characters whom it is conceivable they themselves might be if they had lived or grown up in Chicago or New York, England, Japan or Pakistan.

(3) Fiction, non-fiction and poetry they expect to treasure for a lifetime and itemize in their wills, and which therefore appears to be worth the cost of firm binding, clean good paper and clear print.

(4) Light, pleasant fiction and readable non-fiction of fleeting value, either in paper-binding or at reprint prices.

Rural readers, Mrs. Carroll adds, have seen little in recent years which meets these requirements. What they have found, they cherish, and they are loyal to the authors whom they trust, though often they do not know at all where they can get another title by one of these trusted authors, or when that author publishes a new book.

Gladys believes that today there is little difference between rural and metropolitan—city and larger small town readers. Readers in the cities and towns have easier access to books and information about them. But they settle more easily for the tripe & unwholesome stuff. They accept what everyone reads more readily, and are less contented sexually. Rural readers love life more than literature, are more healthily adjusted and don't care a tinker's dam what other people read, do and are hungry for. They have more independence.

Gladys Carroll has expressed in this talk the very real cleavage between the two wide extremes of the publishing business. On the one side are most of the sophisticated, hard boiled editors, who look down on the "bible belt" and feel that they are only truly delineating life, if at the low level they offer a steady diet of gangster drama, sex or materialism gone mad. On the upper level an aristocratic literary hierarchy use not too dissimilar materials with which to view the state of the nation and human beings pessimistically through perverted, negative philosophies and the atavistically-ground eyeglasses of the pseudo psychiatrist.

At the other end of the prism are the "do-gooders" and "sweetness-and-light" types of story-tellers. They must preach a superficial philosophy of goodness and coat the morals they force down the throats of readers, whom they alienate with their unrealistic & distorted day-dreams. Otherwise they aren't living at the top of their souls. And at the intellectual level, like the columnists who sit too often in tiny cubicles athwart wire service tickers, they try to digest & write significantly about the events of the day & history in the making.

REWRITE and, I think, Gladys Carroll, seek a clean, fresh breeze be turned on the editorial offices. We want a fine, upstanding, dramatic and realistic literature that combines good art with some of the love of living and sanity of country living. For years REWRITE has advocated that both editors and politicians instead of hibernating entirely in New York and Washington, get out and see what the readers and constituents are doing and thinking and desiring ardently back home among the grass-roots.

It is not too much to say that much of the current decadence and moral decay is due to the failure of those who write and those who edit, to get close enough to their materials. Whenever literature becomes separated from, and therefore represents a distortion of the life it seeks to portray and interpret, both literature and life suffer. We have said for years that much of the publishing business, unhappily, is being done in a vacuum. You've only to study the pictures of the "literary boys" hoisting Tom Collins and Manhattans—while they toast a new "significant" book—to see what I mean. Anyone who thinks that much of the literature which gets published in the anthologies of "best" stories of the year, is representative of or comprehended, understood and enjoyed by the real thinking heart of America, is sadly mistaken. These stories are taken from magazines with small and sophisticated circulations. The anthol-

ogies in which the stories are reprinted, in any fortunate year, sell as much as fifteen, or perhaps 20,000 copies. A good many of the copies go to libraries, collectors & teachers or other writers. They are not read even by the sophisticated readers whom Gladys Carroll and the editors of REWRITE feel are not truly representative of the great, disfranchised group of readers that ought to be included in a properly balanced literary diet. And as Gladys implies, most of this latter group are not even aware of the existence of the literary magazines or the anthologies Nor would they understand or value them, if they did.

In speaking out this way we of REWRITE do not feel we are making a plea for mediocrity. On the contrary, we are appealing for a public that is able to appreciate a type of literature that is a cut above the mere entertainment type of magazine or book & just below literary reviews or artistic periodicals. We take our stand in behalf of a great segment of the American reading public, the responsible, middle-of-the-road type of citizens, who do not like what the politicians and the writers have been doing to the country. Who do not like it, but are perplexed, confused and do not know what to do about improving either their politics or literature.

We feel that you do not have to be a teetotaler or a Pollyannaist to see that great millions of the words now being printed, are missing the boat which carries this army of readers. We believe that the editor & writers should wake up to their missed opportunity. We believe that editors and writers & teachers with the guts and the persistence to face this problem and do something about it, would find an unexpectedly large pay-off.

But, you will say, until editors wake up, what can an obscure, unknown writer do? We believe he can do the same thing that a lot of these unnoticed readers are doing. They are going about their everyday life, trying to do a better job. They are talking amongst themselves, gradually getting organized and doing things, practical, specific things. We constantly urge writers to do the same thing. Even a short, homely little story that does a good job of painting life truly and which inspires some reader of a small magazine, is not written in vain. On the contrary, it is a step in the right direction.

In the past year we have watched an amazingly large number of mss. get written well along these lines. Some have been stories & others just practical, helpful non-fiction. But the total is impressive. It encourages, stirs us up to continue to urge writers everywhere to try to learn to write the everlasting best they can. To go to life, & dig relentlessly to capture an understanding of the importance of the (emotional) relations between people. When your plots grow out of what people do and say and think and feel in their everyday relations and in the big, important moments of history, you are on your way to being a writer and a person. And you can be pretty sure you have something of interest for the kind of people Gladys H. Carroll speaks for.

ADD--Book Page. GOVERNMENT IS YOUR BUSINESS. James Keller. Doubleday & Co. $2.00. Another in the growing library of books published by and for the Christophers. Fr. Keller, as in all of the previous books, stresses a simple theme: the fate of the world, and of our government rests on individuals. Taking up the entire framework of democratic working government he illustrates by anecdotes, by practical education and exhortation, how one individual's influence can be felt, and magnified. It is a book everyone patriotically inclined should read.

Congress Has Adjourned. You have from now until January 1st, to tell your congressmen just what you think of the record it established in the recent marathon session. That final jibe at the tax-payer, raising salaries of government employees, more than a million of them, at the same time that it piled more taxes on you who pay for all governmental spending, was an insult to your intelligence

That was just one more ten-gallon tank of gasoline thrown on the flames of inflation. Congress talked a lot about stopping inflation, but when the chips were down, the politicians proved once again that they are incapable of restraining themselves. Where the wide open pockets of the tax-payer are ripe, they will continue to gorge themsleves. Until you put your foot down and say, thus far and no farther, the politicians will continue to spend your money recklessly and waste

Needed—A Constitutional Amendment. "At the end of any fiscal year should there be a deficit, it will be hereinafter apportioned and assessed equally upon all members of the Congress." That would "learn" them. It might well be applied to state legislatures as well as city councils.

Another Type of Form Rejection. A member of the WCS Family recently wrote to the editor of REDBOOK, criticizing a story & asking politely how with all its defects, which she kindly listed, it got past the editorial blue pencil. The letters-to-the-editor editor replied: "As editors we are always delighted to learn that readers have found the contents of REDBOOK as interesting and stimulating as we have ourselves." Hardly the reply you would expect.

Report From the Cleveland Better Business Bureau. On Sept. 15 this agency sent out one of its mimeo bulletins to inquirers concerning the Herwell Publishing Co., Will Herman, who also uses the name Will H. Murray. BBB states certain firms listed in Herman's list of "57 Concerns Who Pay Cash For Newspaper-Clippings" (this sells for $1) state they do not pay cash and are incorrectly listed.